
*Difference of Conditions consider'd with respect
to Learning and Morals ;*

I N

A S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Univerfity of CAMBRIDGE.

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Exposition of Cambridge and its history
to the University and the public

1871

A. S. R. M. O. N.



University of Cambridge

*Difference of Conditions consider'd with respect
to Learning and Morals :*

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Preach'd before the

University of CAMBRIDGE

BY

JOHN MAINWARING, B. D.

Fellow of St. JOHN'S College.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. WHISTON and B. WHITE, in *Fleet-
street*; and W. THURLBOURN and J.
WOODYER, in *Cambridge*.

MDCCLXV.

Difference of Condition considered with respect
to Learning and Manners:

IN

A S E R M O N

Preached before the

University of CAMBRIDGE



JOHN M. W. G. B.D.
Fellow of St. John's College

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Printed for J. Whiston and B. White, in Fleet
Street; and W. Thurborn and J.
Woodward, in Cambridge.

MDCCLXX

T O

Nathaniel Ryder Esq;

Member of Parliament for *Tiverton*.

S I R,

THAT the following Discourse relates so much to the University, which will always remember with the utmost pleasure its Relation to YOU, is all the Apology I have to offer for troubling You with this Address. Indeed I am inclin'd to believe hardly any Apology will be requir'd when I consider the happiness I have enjoy'd in that Intimacy with which You have for many years honour'd

Your most obliged

and obedient servant

JOHN MAINWARING.

T O

Nathaniel Ryder Esq;

Member of Parliament for Tynes

21st

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JOHN MAINWARING

PHILIPP. iv. part of 12th ver.

*I know both how to be abased, and I know
how to abound.*

NO doubt men were originally form'd,
and intended for that state, which
was the result of gradual improve-
ments in the art of living, and which
is the foundation of numerous distinctions.
However, the mutual dependencies arising
from their common wants and necessities,
are a sufficient proof of the natural equality
subsisting between them; — not indeed an
exact and perfect equality: for that, we
know, could never be the case: in various
respects men differ from each other, and
even from themselves; — in character, in
constitution, in talents, as evidently as in
their outward condition and fortune.

THE strange, but real revolutions and vicissitudes to which *these* are subject, are every day exhibited on the wide theatre of the world. A spectacle that furnishes abundant occasions for pity and terror, often indeed claims so much of both, that a serious and well-disposed observer can hardly be reconciled to it; the less so, when he perceives that those evils which are ascribed to Providence, are but the offspring of human policy. For, whatever falsehood there may be in poetical representations, it is still true, that the disparities in a state of nature were few and inconsiderable. But, as if mankind came together only to be set at a greater distance, the distinctions form'd at the commencement of society, in the progress of it have increas'd and multiplied almost without measure. Among the many advantages which social union and civil dominion brought with them, this inconvenience hath intruded itself: for such it may well seem, if we reflect a moment on the general prevalence of tyranny and servitude wherever the artificial distinction of ranks is carried farthest.

THIS

THIS unhappy consequence of the civil-
 iz'd state is the more to be lamented, if we
 attend to the difficulties of acting rightly
 under either of those extremes which are so
 congenial to it. Persons in the middle
 ranks, like the inhabitants of the milder
 climes, have little experience of those ex-
 cesses which are so unfriendly to human na-
 ture. However, it has often been observed,
 and probably with truth, that, by some se-
 cret contrivance of nature, the bodies of
 men can accommodate themselves to the se-
 veral climates under which they are plac'd.
 Now, since these do not differ from each
 other in a more eminent degree, than the
 circumstances of men; it should seem pro-
 bable that their minds would be furnish'd
 with some kind of armour suitable to the
 conflicts to which they are liable. And this
 reasoning from analogy we may venture to
 pursue a step further without much danger
 of being oppos'd by experience. For, as
 in the several districts of the *globe*, men
 have some sort of natural defence against
 the rigors and inclemencies to which those
 parts are obnoxious; so, in the several con-
 ditions

ditions of *life*, they may be fortified against the assaulting hardships on the one hand, and guarded against the insidious allurements on the other. These obvious effects of experience and the power of habit, cannot be contested. If arguments were wanting, we might appeal to history. Bad as the world is, it abounds in examples of illustrious indigence; and it would be easy, if occasion were, to point out such among the opulent, as have been honour'd yet more for their virtue, than for the splendor of their condition.

LET us now try to collect some of those marks, which discover the truth and validity of every pretension to that *moral science*, in which the Apostle excell'd so much. This endeavour will be the more pertinent, as numbers resort hither from all corners of the kingdom, who are born to no fortunes, and to very great ones. I begin with the persons of this higher class.

THE first and most striking mark of "knowing how to abound," is, the endeavour

your to guard against those vices and defects, which are the usual attendants of opulence. Out of the many which occur, I shall mention at present only the love of money, and the love of ease, both enemies alike to virtue, and to learning.

THERE is a sort of inconsistency in the composition of man, a creature naturally active, and yet naturally averse to labour. It should seem indeed as if the human mind were held in its course, like the globe, by the combin'd influence of contrary forces; and that from this opposition of principles mutually restraining and tempering each other, resulted the harmony of the human system.

THAT principle which seems to predominate on the whole, is, indolence, or the love of ease; but where its excesses would be most pernicious, it is happily counterbalanc'd by the fear of want: and where there is *no* fear of this sort, it may still be conquer'd by ambition, or the desire of excelling. For if the most trifling art, the
 I most

most frivolous accomplishment cannot be attain'd without earnest *application* ; how much less a proficiency in moral, or literary attainments. This necessity of application is not superseded by parts, any more than by birth, or by riches. The only things in which men materially differ from each other, are faculties and endowments, or the improvements which these receive. Not all the contrivance of the most expert flattery can hide from the rich this ungrateful truth. And why should it be hid ? — It is their *own* fault, if, with such superior opportunities of improving their talents, and of distinguishing themselves in the service of mankind, they are not honour'd with the *just* elogiums, the *sincere* acclamations of their fellow-creatures. But when such persons are only the more eminent for their greater progress in vice ; — or when they are contented to practise the very lowest degrees of virtue ; — not lawless or licentious, not lazy or luxurious, not insolent or oppressive ; — yet poorly creeping within the narrow compass of common honesty, while they have free scope to expatiate through

through the boundless sphere of Christian beneficence — this extreme ignorance “how to abound,” must be answer’d for to that very Person, who hath declared with his own mouth, that he “to whom much is given, of him shall much be requir’d.”

ANOTHER mark of this knowledge, is, “a just sense of the obligation, from which no rank nor riches can release us, that of conforming to laws appointed for the regulation of human conduct.”

If there were *any* that could plead an exemption from them, it would certainly be the very poorest of all, whose wants, in spite of every legal, and every charitable provision that can be made for them, are sometimes extremely urgent and almost irresistible. While we blame and punish the irregular acts, by which they seek to supply them, we cannot but feel some pity for the wretched actors. But when the *rich* and *powerful* disregard, or violate those very laws, by which their wealth and power and persons are secur’d from all violation; it is evident

dent how much more they deserve the penalties they elude, than the distinctions they retain. Sometimes indeed it is their fortune to suffer those, and forfeit these, when the enormous excesses of pride or passion render them responsible to the magistrate, and occasion them to pay to *public Justice* that tribute, which was due to *Nature*. This indeed is the last and poorest argument for obedience; — such as never need be offer'd to persons of a liberal and ingenuous spirit, with whom the sense of decorum and of duty will have more weight, than any views of interest, or apprehensions of danger. But if in any lesser instance the laws are against them, let them reflect, that the moment they cease to be impartial, there is an end of all their efficacy; that the permanency of states and societies depends not more on the wisdom with which such rules are fram'd, than on the vigour with which they are executed; in short, that when this relaxes in any great degree (of which there is danger whenever it relaxes at all) the certain effects are — a general licentiousness, and an open contempt of authority; which tend to the
dissolution

dissolution not of discipline only, but of government itself. I would beg leave to remind them further, that the influence which the *example* of the rich must needs have in every community, renders a strict conformity on *their* part the more indispensable. This efficacy is so powerful and so infallible, that they may be said to have the morals of the people in their own keeping. And if they consider'd such influence in all the several stages of its progression and propagation; — as diffusing itself through the present generation; as extended to future times, perhaps to the remotest periods; they could not but be shock'd at such a view of indiscretion, and its consequences. Indeed almost every instance of *their* conduct even in private life, is of some importance to the community. Of how much then is the *education* they receive? What wisdom, and care, and fidelity does it require to conduct it? What difficulties does such a trust imply? What rewards does a right discharge of it justly challenge?

ONE of the chief purposes of education is, to conquer by early habits of submission, that impatience of controul, which, if not created, is at least confirm'd by the consciousness of superior advantages. But what can be done, when the vanity of the rich concurring with the force of misguided affection, obstructs this purpose by relaxing the parental authority, and by preposterously limiting that of instructors, from whom the chief thing to be fear'd is too much indulgence?

I SHALL conclude this first division of my Discourse by the mention of one mark more: and that is, "private œconomy."

WITHOUT a proper attention to this point, splendor, magnificence, hospitality are all out of place, and out of character; the more they are display'd, the more striking is the incongruity of their appearance; the more glaring the falsehood of their pretensions. For let the possessions of the careless and profuse be what they will; let their intentions be ever so upright; their *habits* will not permit

permit them to be generous, or even just. A regard to morals render'd the establishment of sumptuary laws a capital consideration in some of the best govern'd states. A regard to learning, independent of the connexion it has with morals, exclusive of the mutual sympathy between these objects, should keep at a distance from these man-sions *the taste for expence*, which, whether it runs in the channel of vanity, or voluptuousness, is equally unsuitable and absurd in a place of education.

It may seem superfluous so much as to mention the contrary extreme: for I presume not to instruct the *aged*; and this is an error not natural in *young* persons, whose very passions, if no better principles, will defend them from it. For how should they submit to those habitual and severe restraints which *thriftiness* imposes; or how attend to the troublesome, tedious methods of *saving*, and of *boarding*? — You, who are not yet initiated in these mysteries of worldly wisdom; who are not yet taught by Avarice to reason away the rights of Nature,

ture, will consider some part of what you possess, beyond the *absolute* and *relative* necessities of life, as a tribute to HUMANITY ; — as a downright debt which you owe to those that want.

ALL that beautiful tract which lies beyond the limits of *strict*, and of *natural* JUSTICE, is the province of LIBERALITY. Where-ever there are great superfluities, they will easily find a vent in the indulgence of this noble principle. It never is at a loss either for objects, or occasions. To *distinguish*, and to *look out* for these, is the last and best proof of “knowing how to abound.”

LET us now turn our attention to those of the opposite class, whose glory it is, or should be, to “know how to be abased.”

THERE are two principal characters that denote this knowledge : and the first of these is, *contentment*.

LET us consider the nature of this quality, and the occasions in which it may be exercised

cis'd by the persons we are now to speak of ;
— by those who are born to no inheritance,
and have made learning and religion their
profession.

THERE are many misfortunes which no
skill can remove, many disappointments
which no prudence can prevent. But how
much are they capable of being mitigated by
temper and reflexion ? How greatly are they
aggravated by a fruitless opposition ? The
mind of an irritable frame receives as much
harm from the violence of its own emotions,
as from the evil itself. It spends that force
which should enable it to support the weight,
in unavailing efforts to shake it off.

As it is the work of Providence to direct
ill accidents to beneficial ends ; it is the
character of this virtue to convert them into
occasions of faith and devotion. And tho'
it is doubtless a duty to suit our sentiments
to our situation, and reduce our desires
within the limits it prescribes them ; yet is
there something great and generous in a full
and free assent to those arrangements, a vo-

luntary and chearful submission to that order, by which we are consign'd to a state of suffering. This disposition to co-operate with the great Governor of the universe, and to lend our best assistance to accomplish his designs, really puts us out of the power of Fortune: how impotent are the efforts she employs to depress us, when by our own native piety we are rais'd to the eminence of those inspir'd persons, who are represented "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

BUT as riches do not *exclude* virtue or talents, any more than they *impart* such endowments, I know of no obligation incumbent on scholars to remain in a state of indigence.

SOME branches of literature demand *an acquaintance with the world*, which tends to open and enlarge the mind, but cannot be form'd or maintain'd without something more than a bare subsistence. Contentment therefore must not be understood in such a sense as would preclude the perfection of our talents.

talents. It is not that listless, languid, supine disposition, which hinders us from mending our condition ; but that calm, sedate, philosophic spirit, which supports us under it, which reconciles us to it, when it cannot be mended : which represses the risings of unruly passion, ever prompt to vent itself in complainings when no relief can be had ; or to suggest to us such methods of procuring it, as reason interdicts.

THE most natural method for a Scholar in narrow circumstances to raise himself to some degree of eminence and consideration, if not of ease and affluence, is, by forming connexions in the *world*. And the opportunities of doing this are not to be neglected ; — are certainly desirable, provided the motives on which they are form'd are not indirect and indelicate, nor the terms degrading on which they are conducted. For when this is the case, the few fortunate adventurers have little cause to triumph ; and in the number of those who miscarry, not one hath any right to complain. Indeed, whether we consider the difficulty of being qualified

qualified for such a *commerce*, or the *risques* attending it even when rightly carried on, a discrete person would beware of engaging in it hastily; much less would he stake his happiness upon it, or make it a principal object of pursuit. But the imprudent and the vain, the forward and the bold still venture their all on that ocean, where so many have been wreck'd, or toss'd in vain: sanguine in their hopes, and confident in their expectations, tho' constant experience has shewn how common it is for the most just and reasonable to be disappointed. The occasions for the exercise of contentment are then too clearly seen, when all the fruits of our ambitious labour are blasted at once; and we return to the harbour of retirement and solitude, only to repent that we ever left it.

THE other character which is equally necessary in a state of indigence, is, *fortitude*. Let us consider the nature of *this* virtue, and the occasions we may have for the exercise of it.

IT

It consists in a certain elevation of mind, and firmness of temper, which defends us equally against the temptations, and the insults to which poverty is expos'd.

AND here I cannot help lamenting the hard destiny of persons in the character and capacity above describ'd. For how extremely difficult is it so to conduct themselves, as to avoid the imputation of pride, if they are not mean ; or of meanness, if they are not proud ? — Fortitude keeps us at an equal distance from both these extremes, teaches us to maintain the dignity of our profession in a state of dependency, and at the same time to preserve that modest, humble, grateful disposition, so very suitable to it. But the tame and passive, the diffident and desponding temper of some persons, not otherwise faulty, is a melancholy spectacle ! For the honour of learning suffers doubly ; — from the injurious treatment that is offer'd to its professors ; and from the abject manner in which it is receiv'd.

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NOT but resolution and delicacy may over-act their part on these occasions. Witness those ingenious and high-spirited youths, who, much disgusted at small neglects, have hastily renounc'd the advantages which lay before them, and were no more than the just wages of their hard service.

SUCH rashness is indeed far preferable to that artifice, which labours to justify every method that can be invented to ease or abridge this service, by pretending it is insupportable, and that in such extreme cases there is no room for a rigid morality. The last of these errors is much the worst. For as neither truth nor virtue are essentially injur'd by *all* instances of deference to the fancies and humours of our superiors: so there are many, which it would exceed the capacity of the most consummate Casuist to defend in any tolerable manner. When this deference is slavish and excessive, either it defeats its own end by betraying its nature; or if it succeeds, so much the worse for both parties, sure to suffer in the ingenuity of their character, and confirm'd alike in their

their respective ill habit, of a base falsehood on the one hand, and of a vain credulity on the other. I will only add, as a consolation to those, for whom these cautions are intended, that they need not be ashamed of owing nothing to fortune; nor of any assistance they owe to persons plac'd in a higher sphere of life than themselves. As well might the *Moon* be ashamed of that little light which she borrows from the *Earth*. The honour that is done to *real* talents is reflected back with increase on all who reward them. And if none do this, in spite of inattention, injustice, or neglect, they must ever carry with them their own reward and encomium; — attended with the purest satisfactions, and applauded by the wise and virtuous, who know that the security of every thing truly important and valuable, depends on the industry with which they are cultivated, and the fidelity with which they are applied.

F I N I S.

[21]
Just Publish'd by the same AUTHOR,

THE SECOND EDITION,

Inscrib'd to the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Hyden.

TWO DISCOURSES

ON
The Offices of PITY and COURTESY,

Preach'd before the University of Cambridge.

LIKEWISE,

Inscrib'd to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Warrington.

ON
A DISCOURSE

ON
The Nature of COMPLAINTS Civil
and Religious.

Preach'd before the same University.

